

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims, subsequent to reissuance of the Notice of Allowance, mailed February 8, 2001, in connection with the above-identified application, in order to further clarify various aspects of the present invention. Specifically, claims 1, 3, 8, 9 and 11, the independent claims in the application, have been amended to delete recitation that the cassette table is for mounting "in air" the cassette, and to recite instead that the cassette table is for mounting the cassette at a position of which an upper region of the position is open to a cassette transferring path. In connection with these amended independent claims, note, for example, Figs. 1 and 2, showing cassette 1a on the cassette table 2a, with the position at which cassette 1a is mounted being open to, e.g., the cassette transferring path (including, for example, the transfer robot shown in Fig. 2 and tracks shown in Fig. 1).

Entry of the present amendments, under 37 CFR 1.312, is respectfully requested. In this regard, noting the Petition to Withdraw from Issue Based on 37 CFR 1.313(c)(2) submitted November 22, 2000, which Petition was granted in the Decision mailed January 17, 2001, and received in the offices of the undersigned on January 29, 2001, and the subsequent Notice of Allowance mailed February 8, 2001, it is respectfully submitted that the present Amendment constitutes Applicants' first opportunity for further amendment of their claims after granting of their Petition in the Decision mailed January 17, 2001. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the present

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amendments are timely.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary in order that the invention present be further defined, with more sufficient clarity, to clearly avoid any issue as to an adequate basis for an enforceable contract. In this regard, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments clearly further define over the teachings of prior art already of record, so as to more clearly define an invention present and more clearly provide protection for such invention.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments will require no substantial amount of additional work on the part of officials of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. In this regard, note that the present amendments further define various aspects of the present invention; and, in the following, a discussion is provided in connection with these amended claims and prior art already of record in the above-identified application. It is respectfully submitted that the claims as presently amended are allowable for the same reasons that the claims have previously been allowed, and for the additional reason of the added recitation provided by the present amendments. It is respectfully submitted that the proposed amended claims require no additional search or examination, in view of their allowability for reasons set forth in the foregoing, and are allowable for reasons as discussed previously herein.

In view of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants have made the necessary showing

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under 37 CFR 1.312 (note, for example, Manual of Patent Examining Procedure 714.16), and that entry of the present amendments is clearly proper.

The undersigned particularly directs attention to U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101 to Hutchinson, cited on page 2 of the Form PTO-1449 (equivalent) submitted with the First Information Disclosure Statement Under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 filed April 19, 2000, in the above-identified application. It is respectfully submitted that, particularly as presently amended, U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101, either alone or in combination with the teachings of other references of record, would have neither disclosed nor would have suggested the presently claimed subject matter, including, inter alia, the cassette table for mounting the cassette at a position of which an upper region thereof is open to a cassette transferring path. As seen in U.S. Patent No. 4,851,101 to Hutchinson, as well as the other Hutchinson patent of record (U.S. Patent No. 4,715,764) and U.S. Patent No. 4,917,556 to Stark, et al., the cassette in these described structures is at a position of which an upper region is not open to the cassette transfer path.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current Amendment. The marked-up version is on the attached pages of which the first page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE".

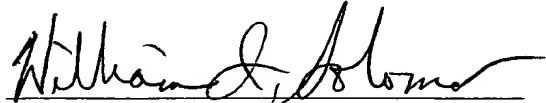
To the extent necessary, Applicant's petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this

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paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414V16) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William I. Solomon", written over a horizontal line.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims presently in the application as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A method of transferring a substrate, using apparatus comprising:

a cassette table for mounting [in air] a cassette at a position of which an upper region of the position is open to a cassette transferring path, the cassette receiving [which receives] plural substrates to be subjected to processing or plural substrates which have been subjected to processing;

two lock chambers for carrying in and carrying out said substrates to be subjected to processing or said substrates which have been subjected to processing;

a single atmospheric transferring device for transferring, one by one, a substrate to be subjected to processing or a substrate which has been subjected to processing, between said cassette [in the air] at said position and said two lock chambers; and

opening and closing devices provided respectively at a side of the [air] cassette of said two lock chambers and being opened or closed every carrying-in and carrying-out of said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing, so as to change over said two lock chambers to being in an atmosphere or in a vacuum, wherein the method comprises the step of:

carrying in said substrate to be subjected to processing,

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or carrying out said substrate which has been subjected to processing, one by one, between the two lock chambers in the atmosphere and the cassette [in the air] at said position, the opening and closing devices being opened and closed every carrying-in and carrying-out of said substrate, one by one.

3. (Twice Amended) A method of transferring a substrate, using apparatus comprising:

a cassette table for mounting [in air] a cassette at a position of which an upper region of the position is open to a cassette transferring path, the cassette receiving [which receives] plural substrates to be subjected to processing or plural substrates which have been subjected to processing;

a load lock chamber for carrying in said substrates to be subjected to processing;

an unload lock chamber for carrying out said substrates which have been subjected to processing;

a single atmospheric transferring device for transferring one by one a substrate to be subjected to processing or a substrate which has been subjected to processing, between said cassette [in the air] at said position and said load lock chamber and said unload lock chamber; and

opening and closing devices provided respectively at a side of the [air] cassette of said load lock chamber and said unload lock chamber and being opened or closed every carrying-in and carrying-out of said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing, so as to change over said load lock chamber and

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said unload lock chamber to be in an atmosphere or in a vacuum,

wherein the method comprises the step of:

carrying in said substrate to be subjected to processing, or carrying out said substrate which has been subjected to processing, one by one, between said load lock chamber and said unload lock chamber in the atmosphere and said cassette [in the air] at said position, the opening and closing devices being opened and closed every carrying-in and carrying-out of said substrate, one by one.

8. (Amended) A method of transferring a substrate, comprising steps of:

supplying a cassette, which receives plural substrates to be subjected to processing or plural substrates which have been subjected to processing, to a cassette table for mounting said cassette [in the air] at a position of which an upper region of the position is open to a cassette transferring path;

transferring a substrate to be subjected to processing or a substrate which has been subjected to processing between the cassette and at least one of two lock chambers which carry in and carry out said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing, using a single atmospheric transferring device for transferring one by one between said cassette [in the air] at said position and said at least one of two lock chamber and

opening and closing using opening and closing devices

which open or close respectively at a side of the [air] cassette of said two lock chambers, the opening and closing devices being opened or closed every carrying-in and carrying-out of said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing, one by one, so as to change over said two lock chambers in an atmosphere or in a vacuum,

wherein between said two lock chambers in the atmosphere and said cassette [in the air] at said position, said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing is carried in or carried out one by one.

9. (Amended) An apparatus for transferring a substrate, comprising:

a cassette table for mounting [in air] a cassette at a position of which an upper region of the position is open to a cassette transferring path, the cassette receiving [which receives] plural substrates to be subjected to processing or plural substrates which have been subjected to processing;

two lock chambers for carrying in and carrying out said substrates to be subjected to processing or said substrates which have been subjected to processing;

a single atmospheric transferring device for transferring one by one a substrate to be subjected to processing or a substrate which has been subjected to processing, between said cassette [in the air] at said position and said two lock chambers; and

opening and closing devices provided respectively at a side of the [air] cassette of said two lock chambers and being opened and closed every carrying-in and carrying-out of said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing, one by one, so as to change over said two lock chambers in an atmosphere or in a vacuum,

wherein between said two lock chambers in the atmosphere and said cassette [in the air] at said position, said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing is carried in or carried out one by one.

11. (Amended) An apparatus for transferring a substrate, comprising:

a cassette table for mounting [in air] a cassette at a position of which an upper region of the position is open to a cassette transferring path, the cassette receiving [which receives] plural substrates to be subjected to processing or plural substrates which have been subjected to processing;

a load lock chamber for carrying in said substrates to be subjected to processing;

an unload lock chamber for carrying out said substrates which have been subjected to processing;

a single atmospheric transferring device for transferring one by one a substrate to be subjected to processing or a substrate which has been subjected to processing, between said cassette [in the air] at said position and said load lock

chamber and said unload lock chamber; and

opening and closing devices provided respectively at a side of the [air] cassette of said load lock chamber and said unload lock chamber and being opened and closed every carrying-in

and carrying-out of said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing, one by one, so as to change over said load lock chamber and said unload lock chamber in an atmosphere or in a vacuum,

wherein between said load lock chamber and said unload lock chamber in the atmosphere and said cassette [in the air] at said position, said substrate to be subjected to processing or said substrate which has been subjected to processing is carried in or carried out one by one.

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